

The Drolls

A Mini Zine

by Alyssa Barrack (Dramaturg)



By Deborah Brevort

The Drolls

Timeline

- 1650s** - Continued suppression and censorship, and continued underground artistic rebellion.
 - 1658** - Cromwell dies, leaving a power vacuum which leads to...
 - 1659** - The dissolution of the Puritan Parliament, which leads to...
 - 1660** - King Charles II ascends, restoring the Stuart line to the throne. The Restoration begins.
- Two theaters receive a license to perform, one owned by William Davenant (the godson of Shakespeare).

Women are allowed to perform on stage, and Comedies of Manners rise in popularity with this new dynamic.

Plays rise in popularity in general, and Davenant's company brings Shakespeare's work back to our world.

From Choyce Drollery, 1661 reprint, Robert Roberts, Strait Bar-Gate (printer). Retrieved from Project Gutenberg <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/60454/60454-h/60454-h.htm>

Black Tudors: The Untold Story - Miranda Kaufmann
Reinventing Shakespeare - Gary Taylor
The Wits, or, Sport Upon Sport - Francis Kirkman

Further Reading for the Curious



Scan to learn more about Deborah Brevort's amazing work.

Thank you for attending our show!

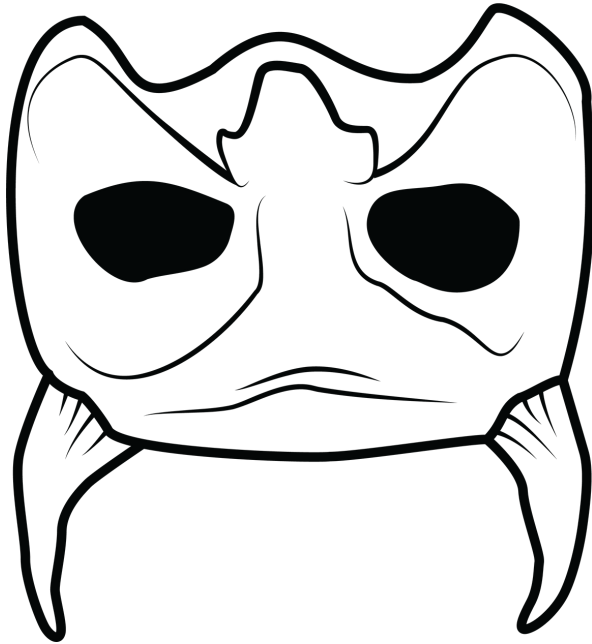
About Drolls

- Short, comic, and subversive theatrical sketches performed during the Interregnum while England was under Puritan rule.
- Popup performances on streets and in taverns allowed performers to circumvent censorship, earn a wage, and maintain audience appetite for theatre during its suppression and illegality.
- Often adapted from well-known farces, folk tales, and plays (mostly Shakespeare's comedies and Beaumont & Fletcher).
- Emphasis on physical comedy, speed, and familiar characters – easy to follow and packed with bawdy and low-brow humor.
- Common elements included music, dancing, clowning, and political satire.



attrib. Francis Kirkman, 1662. Public Domain. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Restoration_Theatre_Drolls_1662.jpg

Design your own mask for the Devil's Dance to reflect your true inner personality!



Devil's Dance Mask

Match the Shakespeare Quote

Draw lines to match the quotes to the play!

"To be or not to be. That is the question."

Richard II

"What angel awakes me from my flowery bed?"

"Oh wall, through whom I see no bliss!"

The Tempest

"The pangs of despised love."

"Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs!"

A Midsummer Night's Dream

"But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?"

Hamlet

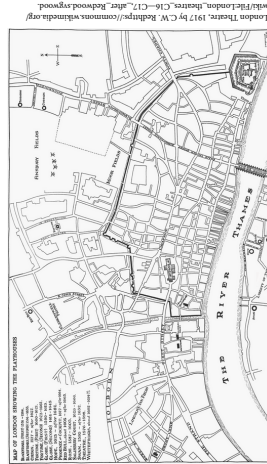
"It is my lady, O! It is my love!"

Romeo and Juliet

"Hell is empty, and all the devils are here!"

Timeline

1599 - Audiences enjoy performances at a number of public theaters, including The Globe. Audiences are mixed-class, including royalty, merchants, craftsmen & artisans, servants, and sex workers.



1576 - The first permanent purpose-built playhouse opens.

1558 - Queen Elizabeth I is crowned.

Timeline

1623 - Shakespeare's First Folio is published. Etherege encounters a copy of this in our show.

1625 - Charles I is crowned. Political and religious tension and unrests builds.

1642 - Puritan Parliament takes over. Theaters are closed for "public good" against their perceived immorality. Public performance is banned, including poetry, drama, art, most music, and public rhyming. Most playhouses are dismantled or repurposed.

1649 - King Charles I is beheaded. Oliver Cromwell comes into power and the Commonwealth is established. The Interregnum (literally "between monarchs") begins.

Artists move underground and the Drolls and closet dramas (plays meant to be read only) help to keep theatre alive during a period of darkness.